



TRANSREPORT

JUNE 2007

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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MEETING CALENDAR

For the most recent information on the following public meetings and others that may have been scheduled after TRANSREPORT went to press, go to www.bostonmpo.org or call (617) 973-7119.

AT THE STATE
TRANSPORTATION
BUILDING, 10 PARK
PLAZA, BOSTON

June 7 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Administration and Finance Subcommittee. MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 9:15 AM

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM

Boston Region MPO Unified Planning Work Program Subcommittee. MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:00 PM

June 13 (Wednesday)

Boston Region MPO Public Participation Plan Focus Group.* MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. Noon-1:30 PM

Regional Transportation Advisory Council. Conference Room 4. 3:00 PM

June 14 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Unified Planning Work Program Subcommittee. MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:00 PM

June 21 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Unified Planning Work Program Subcommittee. MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 9:15 AM

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MPO Amends 2007 Highway Program and Begins 2008-2011 TIP

The MPO is currently developing both an amendment to the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007 highway element of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the draft FFYs 2008-2011 TIP.

Development of both of these documents will be an agenda item at June meetings of the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Please see the calendar for meeting dates and times.

If you have any questions about TIP development, please contact Hayes Morrison, TIP Manager, at (617) 973-7129 or by e-mail at hayesm@ctps.org.

ings of the Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Please see the calendar for meeting dates and times.

Green Line Stations Upgraded to Improve Accessibility

MINI-HIGH PLATFORM INSTALLED AT CLEVELAND CIRCLE

The MBTA opened a new 3-foot-high, 76-foot-long elevated platform on the outbound side of the Cleveland Circle Green Line station on May 2. The "mini-high" platform is the eighth such structure that the MBTA has built since February 2006 to improve access to Green Line trolleys for the elderly and people with disabilities.

"The Green Line is more accessible than ever to people with disabilities," said MBTA spokesman Joe Pesaturo.

The project to improve accessibility on the Green Line began in the spring of 2005, when the MBTA began evaluating the feasibility of building mini-high platforms at some of the busiest surface stations.

Mini-high platforms are now located at the following Green Line stations: Washington Street on the B Branch; BU Central (inbound) and Cleveland Circle (outbound) on the C Branch; Brookline Hills,



Chief elected officials of municipalities in the MPO region cast their votes on May 23 and elected the City of Somerville as a member of the MPO, replacing the City of Everett. The Town of Framingham was also re-elected. Both municipalities were elected for a three-year term.

The annual election was conducted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the MBTA Advisory Board, the two regional members of the MPO.



Cleveland Circle Green Line station

Fenway (inbound), and Newton Centre (inbound)

• Green Line cont. on p. 4

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Executive Office of Transportation, Cities of Boston, Newton, Salem, and Somerville, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, Massachusetts Highway Department, Massachusetts Port Authority, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Towns of Bedford, Framingham, and Hopkinton

Hybrid and Alternative-Fuel Vehicles Jump to the Head of the Line at Logan

MASSPORT AND CITY OF BOSTON PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LOW-EMISSION VEHICLES

Finding a parking spot at Logan International Airport just got easier for drivers of hybrid and alternative-fuel vehicles as a result of programs sponsored by the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) and the City of Boston that encourage the use of low-emission vehicles.

In May Massport dedicated more than 100 parking spaces at Logan for the use of clean-fuel vehicles. Airport customers driving hybrid and alternative-fuel vehicles now have preferred

parking at the airport's Central Parking Garage (Level 6), Terminal B garage (Level 4), Terminal E surface lots, and Economy Lot. Eligible vehicles include those that use compressed natural gas (CNG), hybrid-electric, hydrogen fuel cell, and ethanol- 85 power sources.

Massport also worked closely with Boston mayor Thomas Menino and the city's Hackney Division to offer head-of-line privileges to clean-fuel Boston taxis at the airport's taxi queue. In the

past, taxis waited an average of 30 to 60 minutes before being dispatched to the airport terminals.

Building on the City of



Hybrid taxi

Boston's CleanAir Cabs program, which has put a dozen hybrid taxis on the city's streets since last autumn,

• Logan cont. on p. 4

Downeaster Ridership Up, Service Enhancements Underway

EVENING RUN ADDED BETWEEN BOSTON AND PORTLAND

After five years in operation, Amtrak's Downeaster passenger rail service is proving to be an increasingly attractive means for traveling on the Boston-to-Portland corridor. Ridership on the line grew 32 percent during the last fiscal year, the largest percentage increase in the Amtrak system, said Patricia Quinn, Executive Director of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA). NNEPRA is the coordinator of the partner organizations—including Amtrak and host railroads

Pan Am Railways and the MBTA—that make the running of the Downeaster possible.

As more travelers choose the train over driving on the high-



ways, the Downeaster service is being enhanced. The number of runs has been increased and collaboration with bus services is

helping to complete the overall service package.

The Downeaster currently makes four daily round-trips, which stop at Boston, Woburn, and Haverhill in Massachusetts; Exeter, Durham, and Dover in New Hampshire; and Wells, Saco, Old Orchard Beach, and Portland in Maine.

Approximately 74 percent of people who travel on the Downeaster are visitors to Boston, and about one-third of the travelers are commuters, according to Quinn.

To tap into a larger market, a fifth daily round-trip, departing from Portland at 8:00 PM, will

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June 21 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM

Massachusetts Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board. Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works Conference Room 1, Suite 3170. 1:00 PM

June 25 (Monday)

MBTA Rider Oversight Committee. Conference Rooms 1, 2, and 3. 4:30 PM

June 27 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA. Conference Room 2. 5:30–8:00 PM

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

Monday, June 11

Boston Region MPO Public Participation Plan Focus Group.* Boston Public Library, Mezzanine Conference Room, 700 Boylston Street, Boston. 6:30–7:30 PM

June 13 (Wednesday)

Boston Region MPO Walkable Community Workshop. 114 Broadway, Suite 112, Somerville. 4:00–6:00 PM

Boston Region MPO Public Participation Plan Focus Group.* Thayer Public Library, 7989 Washington Street, Braintree. 6:00–7:30 PM

MBTA Program for Mass Transportation Workshop. Beebe Public Library, 345 Main Street, Wakefield. 6:00–8:00 PM

June 14 (Thursday)

MBTA Program for Mass Transportation Workshop. Boston Public Library, Dudley Branch, 65 Warren Street, Roxbury. 5:30–7:30 PM

June 19 (Tuesday)

MBTA Program for Mass Transportation Workshop. Cambridge Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge. 6:00–8:00 PM

June 21 (Thursday)

MBTA Program for Mass Transportation Workshop. Newton City Hall, War Memorial Auditorium, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton. 5:30–7:30 PM

*See the insert in this issue for details on how to register for a focus group.

'Bikes on the T' Program Improves Cyclist Access to Transit

BIKE RACKS TO BE INSTALLED ON ONE THIRD OF MBTA BUS FLEET

As National Bike Week got underway the week of May 14 and many Boston area commuters left their cars at home and peddled to work, the MBTA announced improvements to the transit system that are making it easier for bicyclists to access public transportation. Through its Bikes on the T program, the MBTA is equipping 35 percent of the MBTA bus fleet with bicycle racks as part of a phased effort with the ultimate goal

of fully outfitting the entire T bus fleet with racks. In addition, the MBTA is partnering with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and Livable Streets Alliance to install additional bicycle racks at various subway and commuter rail stations.

Cyclists can currently take their bicycles on 125 buses that travel on 19 routes in the following communities: Allston, Arlington, Bedford, Belmont, Boston, Brighton, Burlington, Cambridge, Charlestown, Chelsea, Everett, Lexington, Malden, Medford, Revere, Somerville,

Waltham, Watertown, Winchester, and Woburn.

This summer, another 205 buses will be outfitted with racks. These buses will run on 41 routes and will add Beverly, Danvers, Lexington, Marblehead, Nahant, Newton, Peabody, Salem, and Swampscott to the communities served. All of the new buses that the MBTA will purchase in the future will come equipped with racks.



MBTA program adds bicycle racks to buses. Left to right: David Loutzenheiser, Chair, MBTA Bikes and Transit Advisory Committee; State Reps. William N. Brownsberger and Eugene O'Flaherty; David Watson, MassBike; MBTA General Manager Daniel A. Grabauskas; Larry Slotnick, Livable Streets Alliance; Barbara Lucas, Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

The MBTA is also increasing bicycle parking at subway and commuter rail stations. Over the next six

• Bikes cont. on p. 4

Boston Region MPO Activities

BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

The Boston Region MPO, at the recommendation of its Transportation Planning and Programming Committee, released an adjustment and an amendment to the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for public review. The adjustment allocates funding from the MPO's Suburban Mobility Program to several suburban transit service projects. The amendment adds two new transit projects, reallocates transit program funding, addresses carryover funding for two transit projects, programs federal discretionary and earmark funding, and adds a state discretionary grant. The Committee also released a draft of its revised Public Participation Program for a 45-day public review period. The Program has been revised to better comply with the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

Massachusetts, like other states, is facing an enormous transportation funding gap, said Paul Regan, Executive Director of the MBTA Advisory Board, MPO member, and member of the Transportation Finance Commission, at the Council's May meeting. In a discussion about the report *Transportation Finance in Massachusetts: An Unsustainable System*, Regan explained that, over the next

20 years, financial resources will fall somewhere between \$15 and \$19 billion short of the basic needs of transportation maintenance and state of good repair throughout the state's transportation network. The Commission has been presenting its findings to the public and asking for ideas on how to bridge the funding gap.

Joe Cosgrove, of the MBTA, summarized the proposed TIP transit amendment and adjustment that are under consideration by the MPO. (See details above under MPO Action Items.)

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

At its May 23 meeting, AACT members elected Ben Haynes as Chair and Philip Beaulieu as Vice Chair for the 2007 to 2009 term. Don Summerfield, Frank Taverna, and James Oliver were elected to the Executive Board.

The Office for Transportation Access (OTA) announced that monitors have been riding MBTA buses to determine compliance with ADA requirements for calling out

stops. In April 107 bus trips were monitored, and 82 percent were found to be in compliance.

OTA staff are continuing to visit senior centers to register MBTA customers for the Senior/TAP/ Blind Access CharlieCards. A schedule of upcoming outreach events can be found at www.mbta.com or by calling the OTA Back Bay office at (800) 541-8287 (voice) or (617) 222-5854 (TTY).

How should the MPO go about exchanging ideas and information on transportation planning for the Boston region?

The MPO is revising its existing public participation program to make sure it reflects current and best practices and to make it consistent with requirements of the federal government's Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

Please take this short survey and return it to the MPO to tell us about your preferences and the methods you would like to use as avenues for involvement in transportation planning and programming in the Boston region.

How would you like to be kept informed of the MPO's planning and programming activities? (Circle any that apply.)

Printed newsletter

Electronic flyer

Meetings and workshops

Other (please explain)

Printed newspaper

Electronic newsletter

E-mail list serve notices

How could the MPO do a better job of providing information?

How would you most like to get your input and views through to the MPO?

What methods and media would you most like to use to communicate with the MPO?
(Please rank in order of preference, with "1" representing your first choice.)

☐ Surveys and comment forms in printed newspapers

☐ Surveys on the MPO's Web site

☐ In person at meetings and workshops

Other (please explain)

☐ Surveys in electronic newsletters

☐ Comment forms on the MPO's Web site

☐ By letter

What would make participation in regional transportation planning more convenient and interesting for you?



Several small-group discussions will be held to find out more about your views on these questions, and you are invited to participate. Sessions are accessible for persons with disabilities and can be reached by public transportation. Spanish and sign language (ASL) interpreters will be present, if available. To sign up for a focus group, interested parties should contact **Pam Wolfe**, at **617.973.7141** or **pamwolfe@ctps.org**. Participation in focus groups is open to the public, but advance registration is requested. Members of the public wishing only to listen to the discussions are also welcome.

All are invited to submit ideas and comments in writing to Bernard Cohen, Secretary of Transportation and Public Works, by contacting the MPO at the addresses and numbers listed below. Comments are due by 5:00 PM on June 20, 2007.

Copies of the draft Public Participation Program may be obtained at www.bostonmpo.org or by contacting the Central Transportation Planning Staff at 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston 02116-3968; voice 617.973.7100; TTY 617.973.7089; fax 617.973.8855; or e-mail publicinformation@ctps.org.

Accessible formats are available upon request.

Focus groups will be held on the following dates:

June 11 — 6:00 to 7:30 PM
*Mezzanine Conference Room
of the Boston Public Library*
700 Boylston Street
Copley Square
Boston

June 13 — Noon to 1:30 PM
MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza
Boston

June 13 — 6:00 to 7:30 PM
Thayer Public Library
7989 Washington Street
Braintree

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Rail Service Increasing

• Downeaster *cont. from p. 2*
be added. The evening run will better serve tourists from Boston and points south who spend the day in Portland and those from Portland and points north who wish to attend sporting or other events in Boston in the evenings. Bus service is currently being offered during this time slot.

NNEPRA has been working with two bus companies, Concord Trailways and C & J Trailways, to coordinate bus schedules with train schedules and to offer passengers a FlexPass, which can be used on either the train or bus.

As part of a \$6 million capacity improvement program, an effort is also underway to reduce the train's travel time between Boston and Portland to make the train more competitive with automobile travel.

There is interest in Maine for extending the service to Brunswick, Maine. In March a \$40 million bond proposal for infrastructure improvements on the line was presented in the Maine state legislature, but it was not included in the final borrowing package signed by Governor Baldacci in April.

Easier Access on the Green Line

• Green Line *cont. from p. 1*

on the D Branch; and Museum (outbound) on the E Branch. A mini-high platform will be built at the St. Mary's Street stop in late 2007.

The MBTA's recent acquisition of 85 low-floor cars from the

Italian manufacturer Breda is also improving to accessibility on the B, C, and E branches. Each train set on those branches has at least one new Breda car, which allows passengers to board from raised platforms using an on-board ramp, without stepping up or down.

Eco-Friendly Drivers Welcome at Logan

• Logan *cont. from p. 2*

Mayor Menino announced a new \$25,000 grant to increase participation in the program and to offset the costs of new hybrid and alternative-fuel taxis. The grant recipient was ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability, an association of government organizations committed to sustainable development.

Bicycles on the MBTA

• Bikes *cont. from p. 3*

months, approximately 75 to 100 racks will be installed at various locations. New racks were recently placed at Sullivan Square Station.

The Bikes on the T program was developed by the MBTA in conjunction with the MBTA's Bikes and Transit Advisory Committee, which is chaired by David Loutzenheiser, and MassBike, MAPC, and Livable Streets Alliance.

TRANSREPORT

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